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AF/3625
PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants	:	Seal, et. al.
Appl. No.	:	09/815,450
Filed	:	March 22, 2001
For	:	SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLING DELIVERY OF DIGITAL PRODUCTS TO USERS
Examiner	:	Geoffrey R. Akers
Group Art Unit	:	3625

APPEAL BRIEF

United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Appellants, Applicants in the above-captioned patent application, appeal the final rejection of Claims 1 and 28-55 set forth in the Final Office Action mailed on November 15, 2004. A check for the filing fee is enclosed. Please charge any additional fees that may be required now or in the future to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in the present application is Amazon.com, Inc.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

No related appeals or interferences are pending.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 and 28-55, which are listed in the attached claims appendix, are currently pending in the application and are the subject of this appeal.

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IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments were made in response to the Final Office Action.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The present application includes two independent claims. Each independent claim is paraphrased below, with citations to corresponding portions of the specification and drawings, as required by 37 C.F.R. § 41.37(c)(1)(v). These citations are provided in order to illustrate specific examples and embodiments of the recited claim language, and not to limit the claims.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a method for invoking delivery of a digital product from a computer (120) of an Internet vendor (116) to a computer (112) of a customer (102), while maintaining customer anonymity with respect to the vendor (116). The method comprises, with a computer system (108) of a merchant (104):

- transacting a sale of the digital product to the customer (see, e.g., 202 and 204 in each of Figures 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8; and page 6, lines 11-19 of the specification);
- in response to the sale, transmitting to the customer (102) a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery (see, e.g., “order receipt 206” in each of Figures 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8; Figures 9 and 10, which each show a receipt as presented to a user; page 6, lines 20-24; and page 7, lines 1-4 and 21-26);
- receiving a request for product delivery from the computer (112) of the customer (102) produced from the receipt (see, e.g., “delivery request 208” in Figures 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8; page 6, lines 20-24; page 7, lines 27-30; and page 10, lines 27-29);
- in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer (120) of the vendor (116) a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer (see, e.g., element 212 in Figures 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8; page 6, lines 25-28; page 8, lines 2-7 and page 11, lines 6-10);
- wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor (see, e.g., page 2, lines 18-20 and page 8, lines 7-11).

Independent Claim 43 is directed to a method performed by a merchant computer system (108). The method comprises:

- receiving, at the merchant computer system (108), an order placed by a user (102) for a digital product, said order identifying a user and payment information of the user (see, e.g., “product order 204” in each of Figures 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8; and page 6, lines 11-10);
- storing a record of the order in a database of the merchant computer system (see, e.g., 810 in Figure 8A; and page 10, lines 2-6);
- subsequent to placement of the order, generating a fulfillment request message for transmission to a vendor computer system (120) of a vendor that is responsible for delivery of the digital product to users, wherein the fulfillment request message includes information identifying the order and the digital product (see, e.g., page 8, lines 4-11);
- sending the fulfillment request message, or causing the fulfillment request message to be sent, to the vendor computer system (116) to initiate electronic delivery of the digital product to the user (see, e.g., 212 in Figures 2, 5, and 8; 206 and 208 in Figures 3 and 6; and page 6, line 25 to page 7, line 8);
- receiving from the vendor computer system (116) a confirmation that the digital product has been delivered to the user (see, e.g., 214 in Figures 2, 5, 6 and 8; page 6, lines 29-30; page 8, lines 13-15; and page 9, lines 4-6); and
- in response to receiving the confirmation, updating the record of the order, as stored in the database of the merchant computer system (108), to indicate that the digital product has been delivered to the user (see, e.g., 512 in Figures 5-7; 838 in Figure 8B; page 8, lines 13-17; and page 9, lines 4-6);
- wherein the method is performed by the merchant computer system (108) without exposing to the vendor computer system (120) either the payment information of the user (102) or an identifier of the user (see, e.g., page 2, lines 18-20 and page 8, lines 7-11).

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The following grounds of rejection are to be reviewed on appeal:

1. The rejection of Claims 42 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for failure to define a concrete, useful and tangible result; and
2. The rejection of Claims 1, 28-41 and 43-54 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,815,665 to Teper et al. (“Teper”) and U.S. Patent No. 6,484,150 to Blinn et al. (“Blinn”).

VII. ARGUMENT

1. Rejection of Claims 42 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Claims 42 and 55 stand rejected under section 101 as “failing to define a concrete, useful and tangible result.” Final Office Action at page 2, paragraph 4. Claim 42 recites “[a] computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 1.” Claim 55 is identical, but depends from Claim 43 rather than Claim 1.

In rejecting Claims 42 and 55, the Examiner applies a rule that is intended to prevent the patenting of abstract ideas and concepts—namely the rule that claims involving computer-related inventions should define a concrete, useful and tangible result. See MPEP 2106. This rule is not at issue, however, because Claims 42 and 55 do not cover mere abstract ideas or concepts. Rather, each claim is explicitly limited in scope to a “computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program....”

Indeed, the Examiner’s application of this rule to Claims 42 and 55 is inconsistent with the MPEP, which states the following: “A claimed computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program is a computer element which defines structural and functional interrelationships between the computer program and the rest of the computer which permit the computer program’s functionality to be realized, and is thus statutory.” MPEP 2106 at page 2100-13, col. 1, last paragraph (Rev. 2, May 2004). Thus, Claims 42 and 55 comply with section 101 regardless of whether they define a concrete, useful and tangible result.

Appellants also submit that Claims 42 and 55 are not unpatentable as a result of their dependencies from respective method claims. In this regard, the Federal Circuit has found that a claim directed to a physical device can properly depend from a method claim. See *In re Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d 1354, 31 USPQ2d 1754 (Fed Cir. 1994) (finding the following claim to be definite under section 112 and directed to patentable subject matter: “A machine having a memory which contains data representing a bubble hierarchy generated by the method of any of Claims 1 through 4.”).

For the foregoing reasons, Appellants submit that the rejection under section 101 is improper, and request that the rejection be reversed.

2. Rejection of Claims 1, 28-41 and 43-54 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 1, 28-41 and 43-54 stand rejected on obviousness grounds over Teper in view of Blinn. For the reasons set forth below, Appellants submit that the rejection of these claims is improper.

Claim 1

The rejection of Claim 1 is improper because, *inter alia*, Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest a method that involves the following limitations of Claim 1:

- in response to the sale [of a digital product to a customer], transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery;

- receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt; and

- in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer;

- wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor.

Teper discloses a process in which a user accesses services on one or more service provider (SP) sites, and is charged for accessing these services by an online brokering service. This is accomplished without revealing the user’s identity or payment information to the SP sites or their operators. In contrast to the method of Claim 1, at no point during this process does the online brokering service send to the user a receipt containing a reference by which the user may initiate a request for delivery of a digital product. Indeed, there apparently would be no reason to

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send such a receipt given that Teper's online brokering service does not itself transact sales of products to users. The process disclosed in Teper also lacks the following elements of Claim 1: "receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt," and "in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer."

In connection with the foregoing deficiencies in Teper, the Examiner relies on the disclosure of Blinn. Blinn discloses a merchant system 120 that includes an order processing module 129 for processing orders from customers. Unlike the three-party transactions described in Teper (which involve a customer, a service provider, and the broker), the transactions handled by Blinn's order processing module 129 appear to be solely between the customer and the merchant. When a user places an order using Blinn's merchant system, the user is presented with a receipts page listing the items ordered by the user (see col. 8, lines 21-26). Nothing in Blinn suggests that this receipt contains a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for delivery of a digital product. In fact, there is no disclosure in Blinn of *any* functionality for selling and delivering digital products.

It is not clear from the Final Office Action how the Examiner proposes combining the teachings of Teper and Blinn so as to produce the claimed invention. For example, it is not clear how or why the combination of Teper and Blinn would result in the transmission of a receipt "containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery." It is also not clear how or why the combination of Teper and Blinn would result in "securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer." The Examiner did not fully address these limitations. Because these limitations are not disclosed or suggested by Teper and Blinn, the rejection of Claim 1 is improper.

Appellants also respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 is improper because the Examiner has not identified a valid suggestion or motivation to combine the teachings of Teper and Blinn. In connection with this issue, the Examiner asserts that "[t]he motivation to combine is to teach an e-commerce mechanism for buyers and merchants to participate in the online shopping market with a configurable order processing module as enunciated by Blinn (col. 3,

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lines 41-45) which enables the buyers to retain anonymity.” Final Office Action at paragraph 6 on page 4. This assertion does not, however, appear to be based on the references themselves or on any other potential source of prior art. Indeed, one skilled in the art would not have been motivated to incorporate Blinn’s order processing module into Teper’s system because, among other reasons, Blinn’s order processing module apparently is not designed to conduct three-party transactions of the type described in Teper, or to conduct transactions in which the customer remains anonymous.

In summary, because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest all of the limitations of Claim 1, and because the Examiner has not identified a motivation in the prior art to combine these two references, the rejection of Claim 1 is improper.

Claim 28

Claim 28 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 28 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not suggest or disclose the limitations added by Claim 28, namely “wherein transmitting a receipt to the customer comprises transmitting a uniform resource locator (URL) to the computer of the customer, said URL comprising an encoded portion that identifies an associated order.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 29

Claim 29 depends from Claim 28, and is therefore patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 1 and 28. In addition, the rejection of Claim 29 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 29, namely that “the URL is transmitted to the computer of the customer by electronic mail.” Although Blinn mentions the use of email, it does not disclose the use of email for the purpose set forth in Claim 29.

Claim 30

Claim 30 depends from Claim 28, and is therefore patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 1 and 28. In addition, the rejection of Claim 30 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 30, namely “receiving a request for said URL from the computer of the customer, and responding to

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the request by generating and returning a web page that comprises a link for initiating delivery of the digital product.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 31

Claim 31 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 31 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not suggest or disclose the limitations added by Claim 31, namely “wherein the fulfillment request specifies an identifier of the digital product and a network address of the computer of the customer.” The Final Office Action does not fully address the limitations added by Claim 31.

Claim 32

Claim 32 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 32 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 32, namely “wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of at least an identifier of the digital product and an identifier of an associated order.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 33

Claim 33 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 33 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 33, namely “wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order is not marked as fulfilled.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations of Claim 33.

Claim 34

Claim 34 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 34 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 34, namely “wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order has not been fulfilled more than a threshold number of times.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

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Claim 35

Claim 35 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 35 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 35, namely “further comprising receiving from the computer of the vendor a delivery acknowledgement, and responding to the delivery acknowledgement by marking an order by the customer for the digital product as fulfilled.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 36

Claim 36 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 36 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 36, namely “further comprising inhibiting downloads of the digital product to the customer once the digital product has been downloaded a threshold number of times.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 37

Claim 37 depends from Claim 36, and is therefore patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 1 and 36. In addition, the rejection of Claim 37 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations of Claim 36 where “the threshold is greater than one.”

Claim 38

Claim 38 stands or falls with Claim 1.

Claim 39

Claim 39 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 39 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 39, namely that “the method is performed without requiring any client software on the computer of the customer other than a web browser.” In this regard, Teper, which is the only cited reference that involves a purchase transaction in which the purchaser remains anonymous to the provider of the purchased content, requires a special brokering client 44 to run on the user computer. See col. 7, lines 47-49 of Teper.

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Claim 40

Claim 40 depends from Claim 1, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 1. In addition, the rejection of Claim 40 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 40, namely that “the digital product is an electronic book.”

Claim 41

Claim 41 stands or falls with Claim 1.

Claim 43

The rejection of Claim 43 is improper because, among other reasons, Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest all of the claim limitations. By way of example, Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest, in the context of the other claim limitations, “generating a fulfillment request message for transmission to a vendor computer system of a vendor that is responsible for delivery of the digital product to users...,” and “sending the fulfillment request message, or causing the fulfillment request message to be sent, to the vendor computer system to initiate electronic delivery of the digital product to the user.” In addition, Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest “receiving from the vendor computer system a confirmation that the digital product has been delivered to the user,” and “in response to receiving the confirmation, updating the record of the order, as stored in the database of the merchant computer system, to indicate that the digital product has been delivered to the user.” The Final Office Action does not fully address the foregoing limitations of Claim 43.

The rejection of Claim 43 is also improper because, as explained above in connection with Claim 1, the Examiner has not identified a suggestion or motivation to combine Teper and Blinn.

For these reasons, Appellants submit that the obviousness rejection of Claim 43 is improper, and request that the rejection be reversed.

Claim 44

Claim 44 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 44 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 44, namely that “the fulfillment request message specifies an IP address of a user computer to which the digital

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product is to be delivered.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations of Claim 44.

Claim 45

Claim 45 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 45 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 45: “the method further comprises the merchant computer system inhibiting additional deliveries of the digital product to the user once the digital product has been delivered to the user a threshold number of times.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations of Claim 45.

Claim 46

Claim 46 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 46 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 46: “wherein the merchant computer system is further responsive to placement of the order by sending to a computer of the user an electronic receipt that includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that may be accessed by the user to initiate a download of the digital product, said URL including an encoded portion that identifies the order.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 47

Claim 47 depends from Claim 46, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 43 and 46. In addition, the rejection of Claim 47 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 47, namely that “the URL points to the merchant computer system, which uses the encoded portion of the URL to generate the fulfillment request.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations of Claim 47.

Claim 48

Claim 48 depends from Claim 46, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 43 and 46. In addition, the rejection of Claim 48 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the limitations added by Claim 48, namely that “the URL points to the vendor computer system, such that the user may initiate transmission of the

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fulfillment request to the vendor computer system by accessing the URL.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 49

Claim 49 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 49 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 49: “further comprising receiving, at the merchant computer system, a delivery request that corresponds to the order, and in response to the delivery request, determining whether the digital product has already been delivered to the user.” The Final Office Action does not fully address these limitations.

Claim 50

Claim 50 depends from Claim 49, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 43 and 49. In addition, the rejection of Claim 50 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 50: “wherein the delivery request is generated by a user computer in response to user selection of a link transmitted thereto by the merchant computer system, said link pointing to a URL that includes encoded information about the order.”

Claim 51

Claim 51 depends from Claim 49, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claims 43 and 49. In addition, the rejection of Claim 51 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 51: “wherein the delivery request is received by the merchant computer system from the vendor computer system.”

Claim 52

Claim 52 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 52 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 52: “wherein the method enables the digital work to be securely delivered to a computer of the user over a network without requiring any client software on the computer of the user other than a web browser.” As

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discussed above in connection with Claim 39, Teper requires a special brokering client 44 to run on the user computers.

Claim 53

Claim 53 depends from Claim 43, and is patentable over Teper and Blinn for the reasons set forth above for Claim 43. In addition, the rejection of Claim 53 is improper because Teper and Blinn do not disclose or suggest the following limitations added by Claim 53: "wherein the digital work is an electronic book."

Claim 54

Claim 54 stands or falls with Claim 43.

VIII. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, Appellants submit that the rejections of Claims 1 and 28-55 are improper and request that these rejections be reversed.

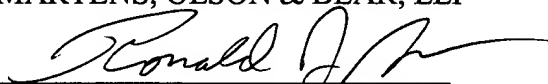
Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: _____

4-13-05

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CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A method for invoking delivery of a digital product from a computer of an Internet vendor to a computer of a customer, while maintaining customer anonymity with respect to the vendor, comprising, with the computer system of a merchant:

transacting a sale of the digital product to the customer;

in response to the sale, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery;

receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt; and

in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer,

wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor.

2-27. (canceled)

28. The method of Claim 1, wherein transmitting a receipt to the customer comprises transmitting a uniform resource locator (URL) to the computer of the customer, said URL comprising an encoded portion that identifies an associated order.

29. The method of Claim 28, wherein the URL is transmitted to the computer of the customer by electronic mail.

30. The method of Claim 28, further comprising receiving a request for said URL from the computer of the customer, and responding to the request by generating and returning a web page that comprises a link for initiating delivery of the digital product.

31. The method of Claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request specifies an identifier of the digital product and a network address of the computer of the customer.

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32. The method of Claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of at least an identifier of the digital product and an identifier of an associated order.

33. The method of Claim 1, wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order is not marked as fulfilled.

34. The method of Claim 1, wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order has not been fulfilled more than a threshold number of times.

35. The method of Claim 1, further comprising receiving from the computer of the vendor a delivery acknowledgement, and responding to the delivery acknowledgement by marking an order by the customer for the digital product as fulfilled.

36. The method of Claim 1, further comprising inhibiting downloads of the digital product to the customer once the digital product has been downloaded a threshold number of times.

37. The method of Claim 36, wherein the threshold is greater than one.

38. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing any information about the customer to the vendor.

39. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is performed without requiring any client software on the computer of the customer other than a web browser.

40. The method of Claim 1, wherein the digital product is an electronic book.

41. A merchant computer system that performs the method of Claim 1.

42. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 1.

43. A method performed by a merchant computer system, the method comprising:
receiving, at the merchant computer system, an order placed by a user for a digital product, said order identifying a user and payment information of the user;
storing a record of the order in a database of the merchant computer system;
subsequent to placement of the order, generating a fulfillment request message for transmission to a vendor computer system of a vendor that is responsible for delivery of the digital product to users, wherein the fulfillment request message includes information identifying the order and the digital product;

sending the fulfillment request message, or causing the fulfillment request message to be sent, to the vendor computer system to initiate electronic delivery of the digital product to the user;

receiving from the vendor computer system a confirmation that the digital product has been delivered to the user; and

in response to receiving the confirmation, updating the record of the order, as stored in the database of the merchant computer system, to indicate that the digital product has been delivered to the user;

wherein the method is performed by the merchant computer system without exposing to the vendor computer system either the payment information of the user or an identifier of the user.

44. The method of Claim 43, wherein the fulfillment request message specifies an IP address of a user computer to which the digital product is to be delivered.

45. The method of Claim 43, wherein the method further comprises the merchant computer system inhibiting additional deliveries of the digital product to the user once the digital product has been delivered to the user a threshold number of times.

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46. The method of Claim 43, wherein the merchant computer system is further responsive to placement of the order by sending to a computer of the user an electronic receipt that includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that may be accessed by the user to initiate a download of the digital product, said URL including an encoded portion that identifies the order.

47. The method of Claim 46, wherein the URL points to the merchant computer system, which uses the encoded portion of the URL to generate the fulfillment request.

48. The method of Claim 46, wherein the URL points to the vendor computer system, such that the user may initiate transmission of the fulfillment request to the vendor computer system by accessing the URL.

49. The method of Claim 43, further comprising receiving, at the merchant computer system, a delivery request that corresponds to the order, and in response to the delivery request, determining whether the digital product has already been delivered to the user.

50. The method of Claim 49, wherein the delivery request is generated by a user computer in response to user selection of a link transmitted thereto by the merchant computer system, said link pointing to a URL that includes encoded information about the order.

51. The method of Claim 49, wherein the delivery request is received by the merchant computer system from the vendor computer system.

52. The method of Claim 43, wherein the method enables the digital work to be securely delivered to a computer of the user over a network without requiring any client software on the computer of the user other than a web browser.

53. The method of Claim 43, wherein the digital work is an electronic book.

54. A merchant computer system that performs the method of Claim 43.

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55. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 43.

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EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None